

Again this year it was a great privilege to play an active role in Red Ribbon Week. I hope the individuals that Shay, Officer Hill and I talked with will always remember many of the reasons we (the entire Sheriff's Office) are here and how much we care about them.

Thought everyone should know what else Shay and I have been involved in lately.

Shay and I attended an ASCT (American Society of Canine Trainers) K-9 school in Bozeman during October 17th to the 20th. It was an intense learning experience and included one day of Canine Neuroscience instruction followed up with two days of Interdiction training which included seeking out drugs hidden in hollowed out, resealed bars of soap, coffee grounds, bags of dog food, containers of Carpet Fresh, inside spare tires, Magic markers and numerous compartments inside and outside vehicles. The fourth and final day concluded with officer safety considerations, tactical application methods for K-9 teams, searching out bad guys, decoy training and working with the bite suit and sleeve.

During the entire training seminar, Shay and I worked with Gallatin County's K-9 teams, Bozeman Police K-9 team and a team from Elko Nevada. We shared experiences, ideas and realized our common areas of expertise and interests. The acquaintances I made during the school provided me with local area contacts for training opportunities.



Shay and I left for our annual recertification in Kalispell on November 5, 2007 and returned during the evening of November 7, 2007. Our professionalism and knowledge was obvious as we successfully completed and passed all exam exercises. We received "Excellent" scores on Narcotics detection and Patrol Work. "You are an awesome K-9 Team!" was the final comments from Evaluator, Kris Fairbanks and Master Trainer, Dale Brandaberry.

"I am extremely proud of what Shay and I continue to accomplish for our community and we really do get better with age".

I would like the citizens of Madison County to know that after many training sessions and conversations with numerous officers and trainers, Shay and I are considered one of the finest K-9 teams anywhere. Because of the opportunities to talk and work along side other law enforcement agencies, it doesn't take long to realize that the citizens in Madison County are fortunate to have such a proactive and progressive Sheriff's Office. Because of enthusiastic encouragement, undaunted commitment and forward thinking of the entire Madison County Sheriff's Office, good things continue to happen.

We are making plans to host a two day K-9 Decoy training in the near future and if funds can be secured, a two day K-9 legal update with tactical seminar will be planned.

Everyone is encouraged and welcomed to contribute to the Madison County Sheriff's K-9 program in any way they can. Feel free to contact the Madison County Sheriff's Office at any time to learn how you may get involved.

Dan S. Birdsill
Deputy Sheriff/K-9 Handler
Madison County Sheriff's Office
PO Box 276
Virginia City, MT 59755
406-843-5301

